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TIME IS RUNNING OUT FOR THE NEW YORK SMASHERS!

DOWN BY FOUR POINTS WITH ONLY SECONDS REMAINING IN THE GAME, NUMBER 12, QUARTER-BACK JACK MAGNI-CONTE, IGNORES THE MASSIVE LINEMEN DIVING FOR HIM--

VISITORS 21
SMASHERS 17
0:14

--AS HE ATTEMPTS ONE, LAST, DESPERATE PASS!

FIFTY-NINE YARDS DOWNFIELD, THE BALL FINDS ITS TARGET, WIDE RECEIVER "DASHER" CORBIN! BUT, THEN--

--DASHER IS TACKLED ON THE TWO YARD LINE!

=UFF= FORCED HIM TO KNOCK ME OUT OF BOUNDS, SO THAT THEY'D STOP THE CLOCK!

DASHER TOOK A BAD HIT--BUT HE MANAGED TO GAIN US TIME FOR ONE-- MAYBE TWO-- MORE PLAYS!

BLUE THIRTY-TWO! HUT! HUT! HUT!!

0:07

BUT, NO SOONER IS THE BALL HIKED TO JACK, THEN--

IT'S A BLITZ! THEY'RE ALMOST ON TOP OF ME!

I'M TRAPPED! CAN'T FIND AN OPEN RECEIVER!

THIS GAME IS HISTORY-- UNLESS I CAN GET THE BALL OUT OF BOUNDS-- TO STOP THE CLOCK!

GOTTA MAKE IT LOOK LIKE A FUMBLE! MUST RELEASE THE BALL THE IN-STANT I'M HIT!

=UGNNE

WE'RE REAL LUCKY THE REFS CALLED THAT A FUMBLE, JACK! GAVE US TIME FOR ANOTHER PLAY!

RIGHT! REAL LUCKY!

EVERYONE'S EXPECTING A PASS, SO WE RUN! THE PLAY IS POWER-28-LEFT WITH BRICK WALL LEADING THE CHARGE!

VISITORS
SMASHERS
0:03

MOMENTS LATER, THE BALL IS SNAPPED, AND THE CLOCK BEGINS TICKING OFF ITS FINAL SECONDS AS...

IT'S ALL YOURS, SUICIDE!

TAKE US HOME!

NO SWEAT, M'MAN! JUST LOOK'IT THE WAY BRICK'S MOWING DOWN THE OPPOSITION!

A TRACTOR TRAILER COULD SLIP THROUGH THIS HOLE!

TOUCH-DOWN!

SOON, IN THE SMASHERS' LOCKER ROOM...

GREAT GAME, JACK! NO WONDER THE PAPERS CALL YOU MR. MAGNIFICENT!

AHH, YOU GUYS HELPED A LITTLE!

HA! SUICIDE THINKS HE DID IT ALL!

HE'S PLAYING UP TO THE PRESS AGAIN... JUST BECAUSE HE WAS LUCKY ENOUGH TO SCORE OUR FINAL TOUCHDOWN!

WHERE'S HIS PRIDE?

DOESN'T HE REALIZE THAT HIS SILLY ANTICS ONLY HELP PERPETUATE THE MYTH THAT PROFESSIONAL ATHELETES ARE BRAIN DAMAGED?

WE SHOULD BE ROLE MODELS FOR TODAY'S YOUTH, AND... HHM!

I DON'T NEED THIS BAR OF SOAP, ANYMORE.

MAYBE SUICIDE COULD USE IT AS A PROP IN HIS BALANCING ACT.

UNAWARE OF THE SOAP SPEEDING TOWARD HIM, SUICIDE SMYTHE CONTINUES HIS HANDWALK UNTIL--

YEOW!

OUT OF MY WAY, BRICK! DASHER DELIBERATELY MADE ME SLIP--SO THAT I'D LOOK LIKE A FOOL! HERE'S THE PROOF!

NO ONE ELSE WOULD DARE BRING *PERFUMED* SOAP INTO THIS LOCKER ROOM!

CALM DOWN, MR SMYTHE. Y'ALL KNOW THAT AH DON'T ALLOW NO ROUGHHOUSIN' HERE!

THAT CLEAR, *MISTER* CORBIN?

ER, SURE, BRICK, I ONLY-- HEY!! WHAT'S WITH MY FACE? IT SUDDENLY FEELS LIKE IT'S *ON FIRE!*

MAYBE SOMEBODY REPLACED YOUR EXPENSIVE AFTER-SHAVE WITH A LITTLE *LINIMENT!*

AT $150 AN OUNCE?!

COME BACK HERE, YOU IRRESPONSIBLE LITTLE CRETIN!

TRY'N CATCH ME!

I DO BELIEVE THE CHILDREN ARE AT IT, AGAIN!

APPEARS SO.

JACK, AH NOTICED Y'ALL STILL SLUGGIN' DOWN THAT VITAMIN MASH.

REALLY THINK IT DOES ANY GOOD?

WHO KNOWS? MY BROTHER *STEVE* MAKES IT SPECIAL FOR ME--

--AND HE'S THE NUTRITIONAL EXPERT!

TOO MANY PEOPLE WORRY ABOUT VITAMINS, AND HEALTH FOODS--WHEN THEY SHOULD REALLY BE CONCERNED WITH THEIR *FINANCIAL* HEALTH!

THE RIGHT TAX SHELTER DOES *WONDERS* FOR ONE'S SENSE OF WELL-BEING!

Y'KNOW, BRICK, IT'S FUNNY HOW YOU LOSE YOUR CORNY DOWNHOME ACCENT WHENEVER YOU START DISCUSSING FINANCIAL MATTERS.

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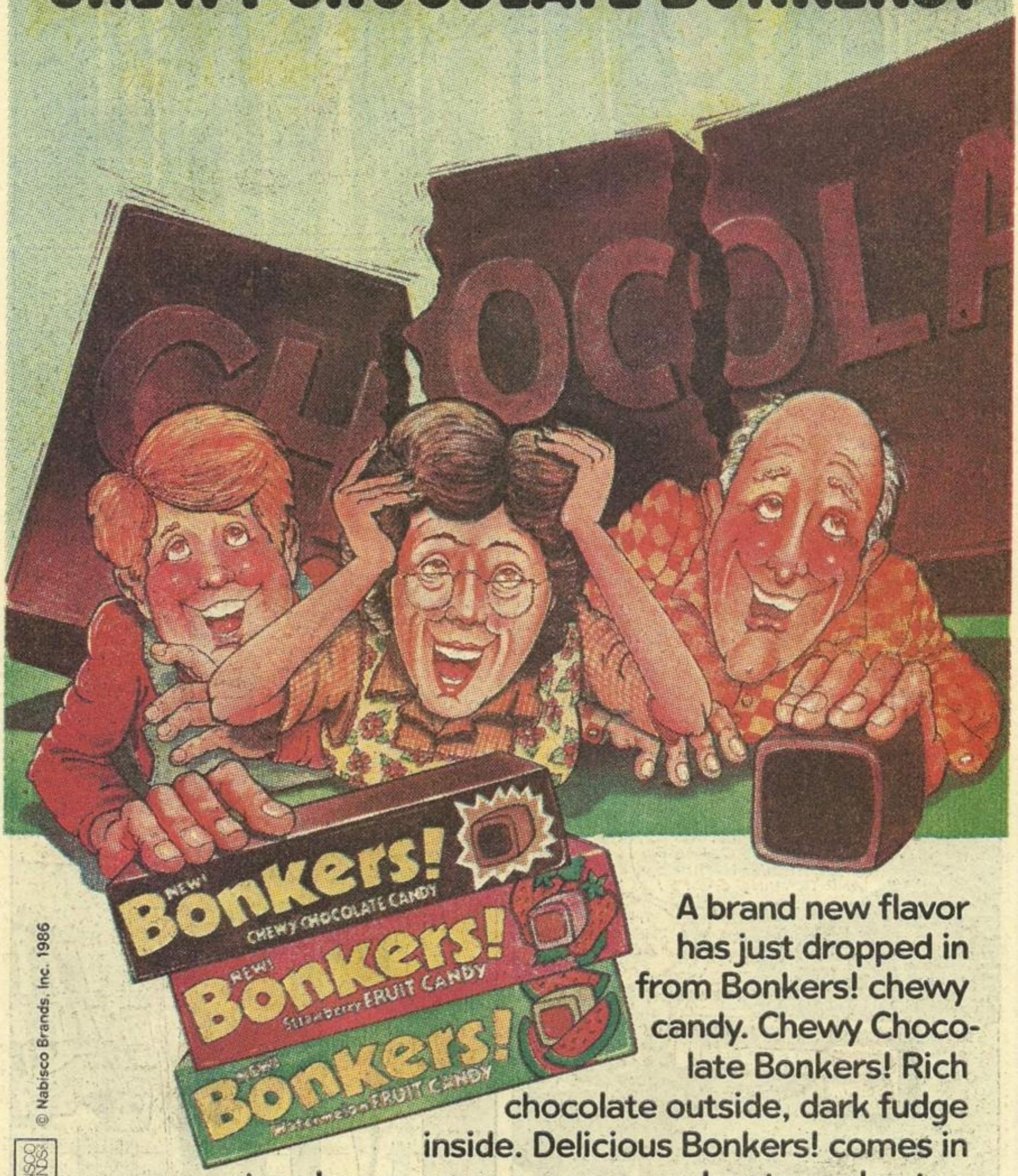


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LATER, AS THE PLAYERS EXIT THE STADIUM, THEY ARE SURROUNDED BY THEIR ADORING FANS...

I DON'T BELIEVE THAT MAGNICONTE GUY!

HE IGNORES *ME*--AND TAKES RIGHT UP WITH THAT BRUNETTE! WHAT'S SHE GOT THAT I HAVEN'T?

ONE HECK OF A LEFT HOOK-- AND A *MARRIAGE* LICENSE!

SHE'S HIS WIFE.

WITHIN A FEW MINUTES, JACK AND DARLENE MAGNICONTE REACH THEIR CAR, AND THEN--

STEVE CALLED, AND ASKED ME TO STOP BY AFTER THE GAME.

I REALLY WISH YOU WOULDN'T SPEND SO MUCH TIME WITH YOUR BROTHER.

YOU KNOW HOW I FEEL. THE MAN USED TO HAVE A GAMBLING PROBLEM!

GAMBLING WAS JUST A WAY FOR HIM TO KEEP ACTIVE IN SPORTS AFTER HE RUINED HIS KNEE PLAYING COLLEGE BALL!

YOU'RE JUST RATIONALIZING!

MAYBE SO, BUT I *OWE* STEVE! HE PRACTICALLY RAISED ME BY HIMSELF AFTER OUR PARENTS DIED!

BESIDES, HE'S REALLY STRAIGHTENED HIMSELF OUT THE PAST FEW YEARS.

JUST LOOK AT THE BUSINESS HE'S BUILT FOR HIMSELF--SELLING NUTRITIONAL PROGRAMS TO SPORTS FRANCHISES AND TRAINING CAMPS!

THANKS TO THE MONEY HE *BORROWED* FROM YOU!

GIVE IT A REST, HUH?

JACK! DARLENE! I'M SO GLAD YOU COULD MAKE IT!

I'VE MADE A BIT OF A BREAKTHROUGH IN SOME RESEARCH I'VE BEEN CONDUCTING, AND I'M ANXIOUS TO SHARE IT WITH YOU.

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BRACH'S
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WITHOUT ANOTHER WORD, STEVE MAGNICONTE USHERS HIS GUESTS INTO HIS MAIN LABORATORY...

THIS IS IT...

WHAT IS IT?

UH... I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO CALL IT. MAYBE "THE *INTENSIFIER*"! THE MARKETING GUYS CAN COME UP WITH A REAL NAME... IF IT WORKS.

WHAT'S IT DO?

WELL, I *HOPE* IT CAN ARTIFICIALLY STIMULATE AN INCREASE IN MUSCLE MASS! SORT OF LIKE USING STER-*OIDS*, ONLY WITHOUT THE HARMFUL EFFECTS.

IT ALSO HAS THE POTENTIAL OF DECREASING YOUR REACTION TIME!

OVER THE LONG TERM, WITH WEEKLY TREATMENTS, I'M HOPING IT COULD INCREASE YOUR STRENGTH AND SPEED BY A GOOD TEN -- MAYBE *FIFTEEN* PERCENT!

HEY, *GREAT!* WHEN CAN WE START?

*WHOA!* HOW DO WE KNOW THIS THING'S SAFE?

RELAX, DARLENE! I'VE BEEN TESTING IT ON MYSELF FOR WEEKS -- WITH NO NEGATIVE AFTER EFFECTS!

I JUST WANTED TO MAKE IT AVAILABLE TO JACK -- TO GIVE HIM AN EXTRA *EDGE* -- BEFORE THE LEAGUE LEARNED OF IT -- AND I HAD TO SUBMIT MY MACHINE FOR *FDA* TESTING!

BE HERE TOMORROW IF YOU'RE INTERESTED!

YOU GOT IT!

MANY HOURS LATER IN NEW YORK CITY'S CENTRAL PARK...

JACK, WE HAVE TO TALK!

I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE THAT YOU'RE GOING TO BE A PART OF THIS NUTTY EXPERIMENT!

LISTEN, DARLENE, EVERY PROFESSIONAL ATHLETE IS AT THE MERCY OF HIS BODY!

YOU'RE CONSTANTLY RUNNING THE RISK OF A SUDDEN, CRIPPLING, CAREER-ENDING INJURY!

STEVE'S GIZMO COULD REDUCE THAT RISK!

YOU'RE RATIONALIZING AGAIN!

ALL RIGHT! ALL RIGHT! SO I WANT THAT EDGE STEVE SPOKE ABOUT!

I OWE IT TO MYSELF TO EXPLOIT EVERY OPPORTUNITY THAT COULD GIVE ME AN ADVANTAGE ON THE PLAYING FIELD!

EVEN AT THE COST OF YOUR HEALTH? THIS PROCESS COULD BE AS DANGEROUS AS TAKING STEROIDS!

HAVE YOU EVEN CONSIDERED THE POSSIBILITY OF GENETIC DAMAGE?

STEVE SAID IT WAS SAFE--AND HE'S ALWAYS LOOKED OUT FOR ME!

LOOK, I REALLY DON'T EXPECT THIS THING TO WORK, BUT IF IT DOES--!

WELL, THE SLIGHTEST INCREASE IN STRENGTH AND SPEED COULD MAKE A REAL DIFFERENCE IN MY CAREER!

I'D DO ANYTHING FOR AN EDGE LIKE THAT!

BUT THEN, A FEW MINUTES LATER, AS THE PENSIVE COUPLE RETURN TO THEIR MANHATTAN APARTMENT--

--THEY ARE EXPOSED TO A BIZARRE MANIFESTATION--

--AS THE ENTIRE CONTINENT OF NORTH AMERICA, AND THE REST OF THE WORLD, IS SUDDENLY BLANKETED BY A STRANGE, DAZZLING LIGHT!

IT ONLY LASTS SECONDS...

AND THEN...

=UNN=

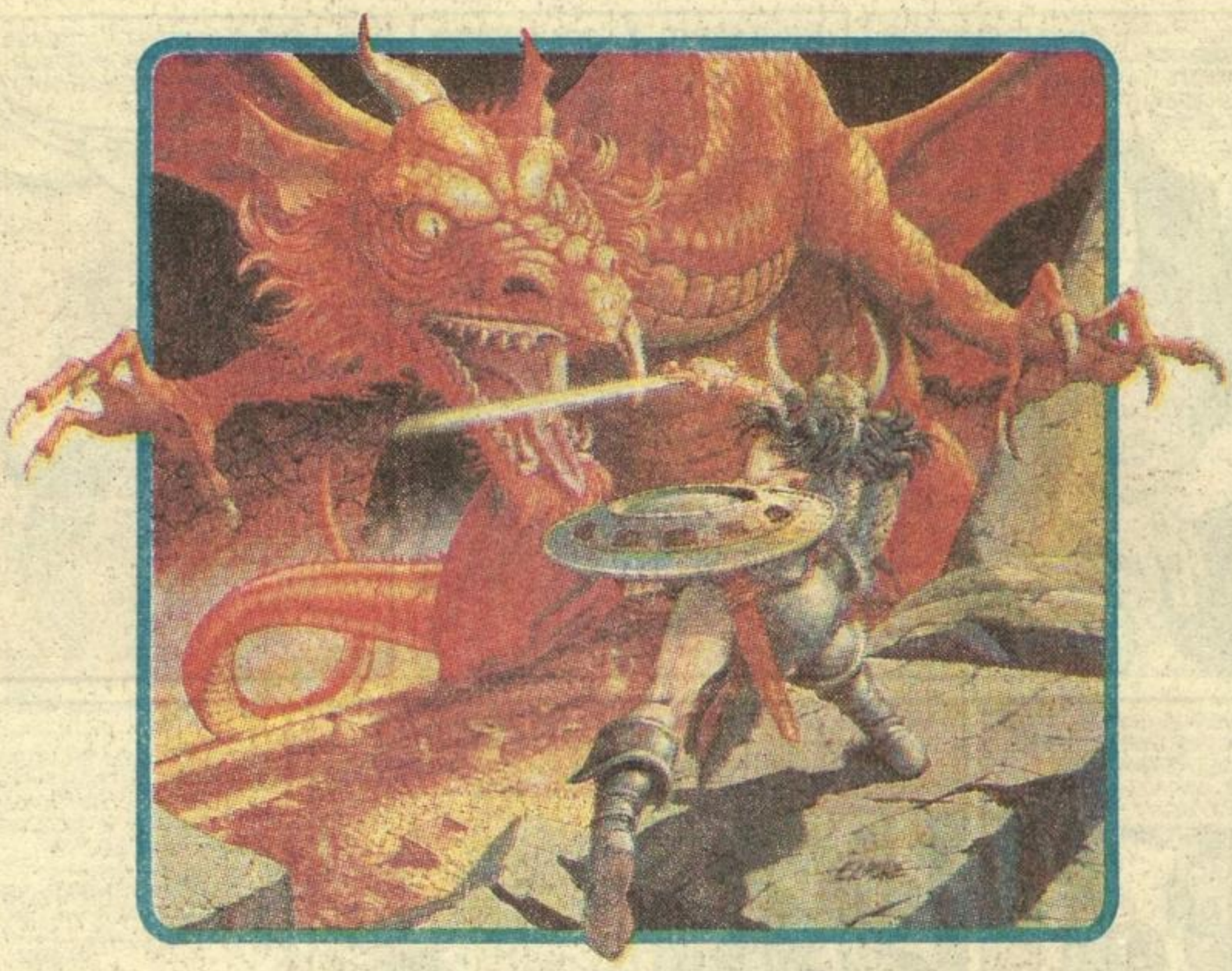
JACK! WHAT IS IT? WHAT'S WRONG?

G-GUESS THAT SUDDEN FLASH MADE ME A LITTLE DIZZY!

WH-WHAT DO YOU THINK CAUSED IT?

I DON'T KNOW

WE PROBABLY NEVER WILL.



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HOWEVER, THE NEXT MORNING...

I'M STILL NOT CRAZY ABOUT THIS!

STOP WORRYING, DARLENE!

HE'LL ONLY EXPERIENCE A MILD TINGLE DURING THE TREATMENT!

GUESS I WON'T BE ABLE TO LEAP ANY TALL BUILDING FOR AWHILE, HUH?

I HOPE YOU DON'T EXPECT ANY MIRACLES, LITTLE BROTHER!

IT'LL BE MONTHS BEFORE YOU FIRST START NOTICING ANY IMPROVEMENT IN YOUR REFLEXES AND PHYSICAL CONDITION!

BUT THEN, AS THE INTENSIFIER HUMS INTO LIFE...

=UNN= MY BODY FEELS... SO STRANGE!

EVERYTHING'S STARTING TO SPIN--!

ARRGH!

SOMETHING'S WRONG!

TURN OFF THE MACHINE! HURRY!

I DON'T UNDERSTAND IT! THIS ISN'T WHAT SHOULD HAVE HAPPENED!

IT'S JUST SUPPOSED TO BUZZ!

I'VE USED IT ON MYSELF AND MY LAB ASSISTANTS, AND IT'S NEVER DONE THIS BEFORE!

LOOK AT HIS HAIR--! IT'S TURNED WHITE! AND, HE'S ALL SWOLLEN UP! WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO HIM?

JACK! JACK! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

I... THINK SO!

J-JUST A LITTLE DIZZY!

HE'S GOING TO BE FINE, DARLENE! I'M CERTAIN THESE SYMPTOMS ARE ONLY TEMPORARY!

I'LL KNOW BETTER AFTER I'VE RUN A FEW TESTS!

FOR THE NEXT THREE HOURS, STEVE MAGNICONTE EXAMINES HIS BROTHER, BUT FINDS NOTHING WRONG WITH HIM...

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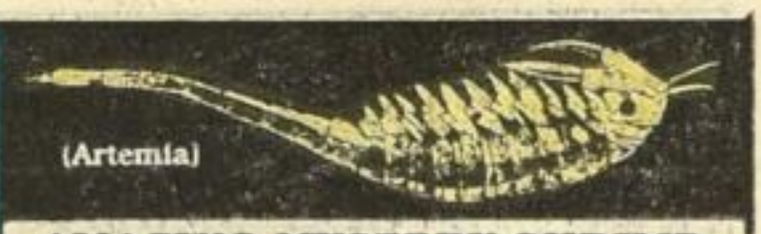


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AND SO, EARLY THE NEXT MORNING, IN CENTRAL PARK...

I DIDN'T WANT TO ALARM DARLENE, BUT I FELT SICK AND DIZZY ALL NIGHT!

I JUST HOPE A LITTLE ROADWORK CAN HELP CLEAR MY HEAD--OR I'M HEADING TO MY TEAM PHYSICIAN FOR A COMPLETE PHYSICAL!

LOOKIE WHAT WE HAVE HERE! FUN ON THE RUN!

LET'S GIVE THE OLD GUY A SCARE, MARTY!

HIT THE GAS!

HEY! WATCH IT!

YOU PUNKS DID THAT ON PURPOSE!

YOU DON'T BELONG HERE, ANYWAY! THESE PATHS ARE RESERVED FOR PEDESTRIANS!

MOVE IT, MARTY! HE'S GAINING ON US!

IMPOSSIBLE! WE'RE DOING ALMOST FORTY--!

TELL THAT TO HIM!

I'VE GOT YOU NOW--!

H-HE RIPPED OFF OUR REAR BUMPER WITH HIS BARE HANDS!

GET US OUT OF HERE! NOW!

HEY--!!

HOW'D I DO THAT?

LATER THAT AFTERNOON...

I CAN'T EVEN BEGIN TO EXPLAIN WHAT'S HAPPENED TO YOU!

SPORTS POWER PLUS

AMALGAMATED INC

INSTEAD OF SLOWLY INCREASING YOUR BODY'S EFFICIENCY OVER A PERIOD OF MONTHS, MY MACHINE HAS APPARENTLY MULTIPLIED YOUR STRENGTH AND SPEED OVERNIGHT!

AND, I DON'T KNOW WHY!

DON'T SWEAT IT, BRO!

MAYBE IT'S ALL TIED IN WITH THAT NUTRITION PROGRAM YOU'VE HAD ME ON FOR YEARS!

IN ANY EVENT, YOUR GIZMO WORKS!

YOU'RE GOING TO BE ONE RICH DUDE SOON!

JACK, I'D PREFER TO HOLD OFF ANY ANNOUNCEMENT OF THIS DEVELOPMENT UNTIL I'VE HAD A CHANCE TO STUDY ITS EFFECTS MORE CLOSELY!

PLEASE DON'T TELL ANYONE ABOUT IT!

WHATEVER YOU SAY, STEVE!

UH-OH! LOOK AT THE TIME! I'M DUE AT FOOTBALL PRACTICE IN HALF AN HOUR!

MINUTES LATER...

HOW COULD MY MACHINE AFFECT JACK SO DRAMATICALLY?

DID I OVERLOOK SOME SPECIAL FACTOR IN HIS BODY CHEMISTRY?

RING!

HOW'S IT GOING, STEVERINO?

M-MR. SLOAN--!

I, ER, WAS JUST ABOUT TO CALL YOU.

I... HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO RAISE THE MONEY I OWE YOU, YET!

HOW CAN I TELL HIM I'VE SPENT EVERYTHING ON MY "INTENSIFYING" MACHINE?

NO SWEAT, KID! YOUR CREDIT'S STILL GOOD!

TO SHOW YOU THERE'S NO HARD FEELINGS, I'LL EVEN BOOK A FEW BETS FOR YOU ON THIS WEEK'S FOOTBALL GAMES--

--TO GIVE YOU A CHANCE TO GET EVEN!

I DON'T GET IT, MR. SLOAN! YOU ALREADY *LENT* THAT QUACK SPORTS DOC A BUNDLE FOR SOME WACKY RESEARCH PROJECT!

WHY GET HIM ANY DEEPER IN THE HOLE BY TAKING BETS FROM HIM, TOO?

MISTER MAGNICONTE IS AN INVESTMENT IN OUR FUTURE... ESPECIALLY SINCE HIS BROTHER'S ONE OF THE TOP QUARTERBACKS IN THE LEAGUE!

ELSEWHERE, A FEW HOURS LATER...

JACK! HAVE YOU GONE MAD?

PUT ME DOWN!

SURE, DARL, I JUST WANTED TO SHOW YOU THE *NEW* ME!

THIS IS NO TIME TO BE CLOWNING AROUND!

ARE YOU KIDDING? IT'S TRIPLED MY *MARKET VALUE* AS A QUARTERBACK!

WE'VE GOT TO THINK! PLAN! GET YOU TO A DOCTOR, AND LEARN EXACTLY WHAT THAT MACHINE DID TO YOU!

I JUST CAN'T WAIT TO GET OUT ON THE PLAYING FIELD NOW!

AND SO, ON THE FOLLOWING SUNDAY...

HUT! *HUT!*

FADING BACK TO PASS ON HIS FIRST PLAY OF THE GAME, JACK SPIES HIS FAVORITE RECEIVER DOWNFIELD...

DASHER'S OPEN!

BUT, THEN--

FWAK!

UGNNE

GET THIS MAN TO THE HOSPITAL!

I THINK HE BROKE A FEW RIBS!

OH, MAN--! IT NEVER EVEN OCCURRED TO ME THAT SOMETHING LIKE THAT COULD HAPPEN!

DARLENE WAS RIGHT WHEN SHE SAID I HAD A LOT OF THINKING TO DO!

I'D BETTER HOLD BACK A LITTLE SO THAT I DON'T ACCIDENTALLY INJURE ANYONE ELSE!

LATER, AT FLUSHING HOSPITAL...

YOU GUYS ACTUALLY MANAGED TO WIN THE GAME WITHOUT ME?

IT WAS A REAL SQUEAKER-- 35 TO 17!

HOW LONG YOU GONNA BE OUT?

A WEEK, MAYBE TWO!

BUT, I'VE ALREADY STARTED TO PUT MY TIME TO GOOD USE!

YOU'D BE HORRIFIED TO HEAR HOW SOME DOCTORS TREAT NURSES!

I'VE BEGUN CIRCULATING PETITIONS, AND ORGANIZING DEMONSTRATIONS TO PROTEST SUCH CHAUVINISTIC BEHAVIOR!

BZZT!

FLAT ON HIS BACK, AND STILL THE RABBLE ROUSER!

MAYBE WE SHOULD STAGE A LITTLE PROTEST OF OUR OWN!

AGAINST WHAT?

NOISE POLLUTION!

MFF

LOOK AT 'IM! A FACE FULL OF PILLOW, AND HE'S STILL YAPPING! SOME GUYS NEVER LEARN!

IN THE WEEKS THAT FOLLOW, JACK MAGNICONTE LEADS HIS TEAM TO VICTORY AFTER STARTLING VICTORY, AS THE NEW YORK SMASHERS BECOME A LIVING JUGGERNAUT, CRUSHING EVERY OPPONENT IN ITS PATH!

ORTS
SUNDAY SPORTS EDITION
MASHED AGAIN!!
MORE DETAILS INSIDE!
DALLAS FALLS 37-3!
HIGGINS STOPS IN
JONES BENCHED
SPORTS
HE REALLY IS MAGNIFICENT!
SMASHERS TAK
L.A. 45-21!
SPORTS
SUPER BOWL BOUND!
SPORTS
CAN'T SACK JACK!
WE WIN!
MALCOLM

AS PUBLIC INTEREST IN THE TEAM GROWS, JACK AND HIS FRIENDS FIND THEMSELVES THE HAPPY RECIPIENTS OF SUDDEN FAME, AND UNEXPECTED WEALTH, AS THEY BECOME INVOLVED IN --

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A MAN'S BEST FRIEND IS HIS BROKER!

AND, EVEN AS THE PUBLIC CLAMORS FOR MORE...

CATCH MY NEW CLOTH, SUICIDE! HAND-TAILORED WITH IMPORTED SILKS!

I'M GOING TO WOW THEM AT THE COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARDS DINNER TONIGHT!

I COULDN'T CARE LESS ABOUT THAT STUFF, DASH!

BRING ON THE WILD WOMEN! IT'S PARTY TIME!

SPUTTER LOOK WHAT YOU'VE DONE TO MY SUIT, YOU UNTUTORED CLOD!

VRROOM!

Y'ALL SEEMED A LITTLE LISTLESS OUT ON THE PRACTICE FIELD TODAY, JACK! ANYTHING WRONG?

GUESS I GOT A FEW THINGS ON MY MIND!

POINT OUT THE HEADS-- AND I'LL CRACK 'EM!

THANKS, BRICK, BUT I'M AFRAID I'M GOING TO HAVE TO WORK THIS OUT FOR MYSELF!

WHAT'S TROUBLIN' HIM? HE SEEMS TO GROW MORE DEPRESSED WITH EVERY GAME WE WIN!

MEANWHILE, AT SPORTS POWER PLUS...

THAT'LL BE ALL TODAY, PHIL!

THIS WAS MY FIFTH EXPOSURE TO YOUR WHACHAMCALLIT, STEVE...

...WHEN WILL I START NOTICING A DIFFERENCE?

I COULDN'T SAY, PHIL.

I'VE TESTED MY MACHINE ON TWELVE MEN, AND NO ONE'S BEEN AFFECTED-- EXCEPT JACK!

WHY? WHAT MAKES HIM SO SPECIAL?

I'VE INVESTED EVERYTHING I OWN IN THIS MACHINE! EVEN BORROWED MONEY FROM A LOAN SHARK LIKE SLOAN!

I THOUGHT I COULD EARN BACK SOME OF THAT MONEY BY GAMBLING, BUT I'VE ONLY BEEN FALLING DEEPER AND DEEPER IN DEBT!

MEANWHILE, AS THE REGULAR FOOTBALL SEASON DRAWS TO AN END, THE **SMASHERS** FINISH **FIRST** IN THEIR DIVISION...

COASTING PAST **MIAMI** IN THE PLAYOFFS, THEY ARE FORCED TO BATTLE **PITTSBURGH** FOR THE CONFERENCE CHAMPIONSHIP AND...

THAT'S IT! THE FINAL PASS OF THE GAME, AND DASHER CORBIN'S GOT IT!

THE SMASHERS HAVE WON 38-21!

THEY'RE HEADED FOR THE *SUPER BOWL!*

WE DID IT, JACK!

WE BEAT 'EM BAD!

YEAH... SO WHAT?

WHAT'S WITH HIM?

I DON'T KNOW, MAN! BUT, HE SEEMED DOWN AND DISTRACTED ALL DAY--EVEN IN THE HUDDLE!

CAN'T BE DRUGS! JACK'S TOO SMART FOR THAT ROUTE!

THIS WAS A CHAMPIONSHIP GAME! THE HIGH POINT OF HIS CAREER...

...AND THE GUY SLEEPWALKED THROUGH IT LIKE HE WAS *BORED* OUTTA HIS MIND!

AND AT THAT VERY MOMENT...

YOUR BROTHER'S BEEN ON QUITE A ROLL THIS SEASON...

SPORTS POWER PLUS

... AND, HERE'S WHERE HIS GOOD FORTUNE GETS TO RUB OFF ON YOU, STEVERINO!

WHAT ARE YOU SAYING, MR. SLOAN?

I'M WILLING TO FORGET ALL THE MONEY YOU OWE ME! WIPE THE SLATE CLEAN ....IN EXCHANGE FOR ONE LITTLE FAVOR!

KEEP TALKING...

THE SMART MONEY FAVORS THE SMASHERS TO WIN THE SUPER BOWL BY SEVENTEEN AND A HALF POINTS!

TALK TO YOUR BROTHER! CONVINCE HIM TO KEEP A CLOSE EYE ON THE SCORE!

I DON'T CARE IF HE WINS THE GAME, OR LOSES IT.. AS LONG AS HE DOES *NOT* OUTSCORE THE OPPOSITION BY *MORE* THAN SEVENTEEN POINTS!

ARE YOU CRAZY? I *CAN'T* ASK HIM TO HOLD BACK LIKE *THAT!*

PWAMM!

OF COURSE, YOU CAN!

THINK ABOUT IT, STEVERINO!

IT'S YOUR LIFE!

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THE NEXT DAY, AS JACK STOPS IN FOR HIS FINAL CHECK-UP, BEFORE LEAVING FOR NEW ORLEANS, WHERE THE SUPER BOWL WILL BE PLAYED...

WHAT AM I GOING TO DO? SLOAN WILL KILL ME IF I DON'T GET JACK TO DO AS HE ASKED!

BUT, HOW CAN I ASK MY OWN BROTHER TO PUT HIS CAREER ON THE LINE, AND SHAVE POINTS?

AND, YET... I CAN'T CROSS SLOAN!

I HEAR YOU'RE FAVORED TO WIN BY SEVENTEEN AND A HALF POINTS!

THAT'S QUITE A MARGIN...

WHY ARE YOU INTERESTED IN THE POINT SPREAD?

ARE YOU GAMBLING, AGAIN?

NO... OF COURSE NOT!

JACK WOULD NEVER FORGIVE ME IF HE LEARNED ABOUT SLOAN, AND THE MONEY I OWE!

STEVE, I HAVE TO KNOW SOMETHING.

CAN THE EFFECTS OF YOUR *INTENSIFIER* BE REVERSED?

IT'S... POSSIBLE. WHY?

THIS ADDITIONAL STRENGTH AND SPEED ISN'T THE BOON I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE!

I'VE BECOME TOO POWERFUL! I HAVE SUCH AN ADVANTAGE OVER THE OTHER PLAYERS, THAT I ALMOST FEEL LIKE I'M CHEATING WHEN I TAKE THE FIELD!

HOW CAN I TELL HIM THAT I DON'T EVEN KNOW *WHY* THE INTENSIFIER AFFECTED HIM?

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THAT NIGHT...

WHAT'S WRONG, HON?

WE RENTED THIS CABIN FOR ONE LAST ROMANTIC FLING BEFORE YOU HAD TO LEAVE, BUT YOUR MIND SEEMS A MILLION MILES AWAY!

I'M LOST, DARLENE!

I JUST DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO, OR WHERE TO GO!

EVERYTHING'S TURNING SOUR! EVERYTHING!

I'M AFRAID STEVE'S GAMBLING AGAIN! BETTING ON THE SMASHERS BECAUSE HE KNOWS MY EDGE ASSURES US OF A WIN!

I'D LIKE TO TEACH HIM A LESSON--AND THROW THE SUPER BOWL.

BUT I COULDN'T DO THAT TO MY TEAM--

--OR, MYSELF!

I'VE WORKED HARD ALL MY LIFE FOR A SHOT AT THIS GAME AND I DON'T WANT TO BLOW IT NOW!

AND, YET, PART OF ME WONDERS IF IT'S EVEN FAIR FOR ME TO PLAY ANYMORE...

I LOVE FOOTBALL! ALWAYS DID!

STEVE'S STUPID MACHINE HAS RUINED THE SPORT FOR ME!

I WANTED AN EDGE--NOT A GUARANTEE!

IT'S TAKEN AWAY THE CHALLENGE! THE FUN!

THERE'S NO THRILL TO VICTORY WHEN YOU KNOW THAT YOU CAN WIN EVERY GAME!

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?

I DON'T KNOW.

I WISH THERE WAS SOMEONE--SOMEPLACE--I COULD GO TO FOR HELP--

--BUT NO ONE'S SET UP TO HANDLE OFFBEAT PROBLEMS LIKE MINE!

THERE JUST AIN'T ANYPLACE I CAN GO!

THIRTEEN DAYS LATER IN NEW ORLEANS, THE NEW YORK SMASHERS TAKE THE FIELD...

THIS IS IT--!

MY FIRST SUPER BOWL!

EVERYONE WHO'S EVER HANDLED A PIGSKIN DREAMS OF THIS MOMENT!

CAN'T WORRY ABOUT STEVE -- OR ANY-THING ELSE!

I'VE WORKED HARD FOR THIS GAME! I DESERVE IT! SO DOES MY TEAM!

GENTLEMEN, IT'S TIME TO KICK SOME SERIOUS BUTT!

FOR THE NEXT SIXTY MINUTES OF REGULATION PLAY, THE SPORTING WORLD IS TREATED TO A STUNNING SPECTACLE.

SCORING ALMOST AT WILL, THE SMASHERS TOTALLY DOMINATE THEIR OPPONENTS--

--CRUSHING THEM BY THE HUMILIATING SCORE OF 65-17, BUT --

THIS ISN'T FAIR! IT'S NOT A GAME --

--IT'S A MASSACRE!

AND SO, A FEW HOURS LATER...

MAYBE I SHOULDN'T HAVE FLOWN BACK EARLY TO SEE STEVE, AFTER ALL... BUT I COULDN'T BEAR TO CELEBRATE WITH THE REST OF THE TEAM!

HE'S GOTTA CHANGE ME BACK TO THE WAY I WAS!

SPORTS POWER PLUS

WHERE IS HE? HE PROMISED TO MEET ME HERE!

KRAK!

WHAT WAS THAT SOUND?

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RIPPING OPEN THE DOOR, JACK RACES INTO THE MAIN LABORATORY, AND...

IDIOT--! THAT CREEP COST US A BUNDLE ON THE GAME, BUT I ONLY WANTED TO BUST HIM UP-- NOT KILL HIM!

WASN'T MY FAULT! HE GRABBED MY GUN!

STEVE--!

UH-OH! WE'VE GOT COMPANY--!

STOP HIM! WE CAN'T LEAVE ANY WITNESSES BEHIND NOW!

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO MY BROTHER?!

=UGN= MY ARM--!

GET DOWN, YOU FOOL! YOU'RE SPOILING MY AIM!

KRAK

WHWHHHHH

OH, MY GOSH--! THAT CLOWN HAS A GUN, TOO!

THERE! MANAGED TO STOP HIM BEFORE HE COULD FIRE IT!

SZKOW!

BETTER STOP THAT LAST GUY TOO!

=URKK=

YOU GUYS SHOULD KNOW BETTER THAN TO GANG UP ON ONE MAN--ESPECIALLY WHEN HE'S MY BROTHER!

WRAM

J-JACK--! JACK!

TAKE IT EASY, STEVE! I'LL GET YOU TO A HOSPITAL! YOU NEED HELP!

IT'S... TOO LATE FOR THAT!

I... I'M SORRY, JACK! N-NEVER MEANT FOR ANY OF THIS TO HAPPEN!

T-THINGS JUST GOT OUT OF HAND!

I... I'M SORRRRRY=

STEVE--!

PLEASE DON'T LEAVE ME!

# universe news

Buildings had flat, smooth bottoms back before 1961. No pipes. No wires. No foundations. Occasionally, people who lived in them (usually professional people) were hit by lightning or splashed with chemicals and therefore gained super powers. Immediately, these folks donned costumes and began patrolling the city looking for evildoers. Sometimes, that involved picking up a building or two (exposing the flat, smooth bottom). Frequently they would also catch falling airplanes. The general populace adored them. Often, the mayor, a plump, non-ethnic type (but, of course there *were* no ethnic types) would invite one of these *super heroes* to cut the ribbon at a bridge opening. No one in attendance at these ceremonies, or anywhere else, doubted the integrity, the sincerity, or the *goodness* of the super hero. No one even had a difference of opinion as to what "goodness" was in any given situation. Airplanes apparently were discreet enough not to fall while the super hero was unavoidably detained or asleep. Or, at least, the public was discreet enough not to wonder aloud why Metro Air flight #202 was saved but Central Air flight #61 was allowed to crash. The fact that the super hero, in effect, had decided who would live and who would die by setting his alarm clock ten minutes later one day never occured to him—and the general public apparently assumed that when the super hero was off duty, it was for a good reason. Perhaps the super hero, in his secret identity, was with his girlfriend (who, of course, would have preferred being with the super hero persona but inexplicably was dating a man who seemed to be exactly his opposite). At least, a super hero was spared the ignominy of being in the middle of going to the bathroom when a plane fell. Super heroes never went to the bathroom in early 1961 or before. No one did. How could they? Those buildings had no pipes.

Clearly, a revolution was needed.

During the summer of 1961, Stan Lee, Jack Kirby, Steve Ditko and a number of other awesomely talented people at Marvel Comics created the Marvel Universe, a place where buildings had pipes, people, including super people, behaved more like real human beings, and yes, every once in a while, they went to the bathroom. Off panel, of course. In other words, the Marvel Universe was more like the *real* universe. Sure, it was a *fantasy universe* complete with mer-people inhabiting the oceans, "repulsor rays," and clothes made of "unstable molecules"—elements no less outrageous than those in other comics. However, unlike other companies' comics, Marvel Comics *made sense*.

Startling.

This bold new approach to comics stories seemed radical in the early sixties. Especially, the three-dimensionalizing of the characters. The idea that several pages could be devoted to a teenager and his aunt worrying about their money troubles would have been heresy at any company besides Marvel. The thought that a page or two should be spent showing a young man's exultation in the gloriousness of unaided flight might have gotten you fired elsewhere. At first, anyway. Over the years, *every* comics company came around and embraced the Marvel philosophy. Some even have done major overhauls of their lines to try to become more like Marvel. Try to find a comics company that *doesn't* do its best to do three-dimensional characters, with human problems and human joys, operating in a logical, internally consistent fantasy world. Like Marvel's. And so it has come to pass that, once again, everyone seems to agree, to a great extent, on how to do comics. Therefore, clearly, a revolution is needed. Again.

During the summer of 1986, Archie Goodwin, Tom DeFalco, a number of other people at Marvel Comics and I created the New Universe. Or, more correctly, we simply decided to put to use a universe hitherto unused in comics. Our *own*. The one we live in. Real pipes. Real people. Real bathrooms. No mer-people. No repulsors. No unstable molecules. In fact, no fantasy or fantastic elements *at all* except for the very few we introduce. Carefully. Does it make sense? You bet. As much as the universe outside your window does. A universe where time passes and things change, and . . . well, you know. You live in it.

Startling.

Jim Shooter
Editor in Chief

## CHECKLIST

- ☐ **FANTASTIC FOUR #296**—STAN LEE returns to the comic that started it all to help celebrate the FF's *25th Anniversary!* JIM SHOOTER has written a story so big it had to be scripted by STAN himself, with art by JOHN BUSCEMA, BARRY WINDSOR-SMITH, RON FRENZ, JERRY ORDWAY, KLAUS JANSON, MARC SILVESTRI, AL MILGROM, STEVE LEIALOHA, BOB WIACEK, AL GORDON, JOE RUBINSTEIN and VINCE COLLETTA! Whew! And it doesn't stop there! Every Marvel (and STAR) Comic is joining in the celebration! But it won't be any fun unless you're there, too, so come and join the party!!
- ☐ **CLOAK AND DAGGER #9**—Featuring art by ART ADAMS!
- ☐ **DAREDEVIL #236**—The Black Widow returns, thanks to ANN NOCENTI and BARRY WINDSOR-SMITH.
- ☐ **NEW MUTANTS #45**
- ☐ **WEB OF SPIDER-MAN #20**
- ☐ **WEST COAST AVENGERS #14**
- ☐ **CONAN THE KING #37**
- ☐ **G.I. JOE UNIVERSE (Limited Series) #1**—The only place to go to find out everything you need to know about your favorite Joes!
- ☐ **ALPHA FLIGHT #40**—The marriage of Sub-Mariner and Marrina!
- ☐ **AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #282**—With X-Factor!
- ☐ **CAPTAIN AMERICA #323**—Celebrate the Statue of Liberty's centennial with Cap!
- ☐ **LABYRINTH (Limited Series) #1**—A special adaptation of the Jim Henson George Lucas film, starring David Bowie!
- ☐ **FANTASTIC FOUR INDEX #12**—The real story about what happened in issues #199–218!
- ☐ **AMAZING HIGH ADVENTURE #4**—Featuring *three* heart-stopping tales, with art by JOHN BOLTON, STEVE BISSETTE, and JOHN SEVERIN!
- ☐ **THE OFFICIAL HANDBOOK OF THE MARVEL UNIVERSE #12**—Continuing with the letter "S."
- ☐ **AVENGERS #273**—Introducing the *new* Masters of Evil!
- ☐ **CONAN THE BARBARIAN #188**
- ☐ **G.I. JOE #53**
- ☐ **INCREDIBLE HULK #325**
- ☐ **MARVEL TALES #193**—Reprinting the first of a series of *Marvel Team-Up* masterpieces by CHRIS CLAREMONT and JOHN BYRNE!
- ☐ **X-MEN #211**—This one has it all! Introducing the Marauders! Crossovers with *X-Factor, Power Pack* and *Thor!* And a major shake-up!
- ☐ **MARVEL SAGA #12**—The Avengers discover Captain America! The X-Men vs. the Blob! The Brotherhood of Evil Mutants! And more!
- ☐ **AMAZING SPIDER-MAN ANNUAL #20**—Featuring the origin of the Iron Man from 2020!
- ☐ **IRON MAN #212**
- ☐ **PETER PARKER, THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #120**
- ☐ **THOR #373**—Featuring a major tie-in with *X-Men, X-Factor* and *Power Pack!*
- ☐ **TRANSFORMERS #22**—Introducing the Stuntacons!
- ☐ **X-FACTOR #10**—Welcome new regular artist WALTER SIMONSON! Major cross-over issue with *X-Men, Thor* and *Power Pack!*
- ☐ **CLASSIC X-MEN #3**—Reprinting the death of Thunderbird from *X-Men #95* and revealing, for the first time, the funeral of Thunderbird!
- ☐ **MARVEL TEAM-UP INDEX #6**—Meet Spidey's partners from issues #99–118!

### MARVEL MAGAZINES

- ☐ **MARVEL AGE #44**—The only mag to read for more info about everything you see here! Plus, the complete scoop on the New Universe!
- ☐ **MARVEL FANFARE #29**—Featuring JOHN BYRNE's experimental Hulk story! You have to see it to believe it!
- ☐ **SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN #129**
- ☐ **SAVAGE TALES #7**
- ☐ **MARVEL SUPERSPECIAL #41: HOWARD THE DUCK**—The official Marvel adaptation of the George Lucas film featuring everybody's favorite fowl! Written by DANNY FINGEROTH. Art by KYLE BAKER.

### EPIC COMICS

- ☐ **SWORDS OF THE SWASHBUCKLERS #9**
- ☐ **GROO THE WANDERER #21**
- ☐ **BOZZ CHRONICLES #5**—A madman threatens untold destruction!
- ☐ **ELEKTRA: ASSASSIN (Limited Series) #2**—FRANK MILLER (writer) and BILL SIENKIEWICZ (artist) reveal more about the world's deadliest heroine!
- ☐ **ELFQUEST #16**—Into the Forbidden Grove!
- ☐ **STEELGRIP STARKEY (Limited Series) #3**—Globelock!

### STAR COMICS

- ☐ **MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE #4**—Meet Rio Blast and Snout Spout, the good guys! Avoid Rattlor and King Hiss, the bad guys!
- ☐ **PETER PORKER, THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-HAM #12**
- ☐ **EWOKS #10**—Special crossover issue, featuring the Droids!
- ☐ **HEATHCLIFF #12**—Look out, it's an alien invasion!
- ☐ **MUPPET BABIES #10**—Tornado!
- ☐ **CARE BEARS #7**—Meet the saddest man in the world!
- ☐ **MADBALLS (Limited Series) #3**—Versus the Badballs!

### NEW UNIVERSE

- ☐ **D.P. 7 #1**—Written by MARK GRUENWALD. Art by PAUL RYAN and ROMEO TANGHAL.
- ☐ **JUSTICE #1**—Written by ARCHIE GOODWIN. Drawn by GEOF ISHERWOOD and JOE DelBEATO.
- ☐ **KICKERS, INC. #1**—By TOM DeFALCO (writer), RON FRENZ and SAL BUSCEMA (artists).
- ☐ **MERC #1**—Written by PETER DAVID. Drawn by GRAY MORROW.
- ☐ **NIGHT MASK #1**—Written by ARCHIE GOODWIN. Art by TONY SALMONS and BRETT BLEVINS.
- ☐ **PSI-FORCE #1**—Written by STEVE PERRY with art by MARK TEXEIRA and KYLE BAKER.
- ☐ **SPITFIRE AND THE TROUBLESHOOTERS #2**—The Troubleshooters get more than they bargained for when they face the Deathtank! Written by GERRY CONWAY with art by HERB TRIMPE and JOE SINNOTT.
- ☐ **STAR BRAND #2**—Kenneth Connell's world will never be the same, as he finds out when he is forced to use the power of the Star Brand against terrorists armed with a *nuke!* Guest-starring Spitfire! Brought to you by JIM SHOOTER, JOHN ROMITA, JR. and AL WILLIAMSON!

THREE WEEKS LATER...

... AND THAT'S THE *WHOLE* STORY! THE GUYS WHO KILLED STEVE ARE STILL AWAITING TRIAL!

WE WERE ALL REAL SORRY TO HEAR ABOUT YOUR BROTHER JACK, BUT THERE IS SOMETHING ELSE WE HAVE TO KNOW...

...DO YOU THINK THE *INTENSIFIER* WILL WORK ON US?

IT'S POSSIBLE, BUT I DOUBT IT!

HEY, I'M WILLING TO GIVE IT A SHOT!

ME, TOO!

OKAY, YOU ALREADY KNOW THE POSSIBLE CONSE-QUENCES...

STEVE INVENTED THIS GIZMO TO GIVE ATHLETES AN EXTRA EDGE...

IT WORKED ON ME-- *IN SPADES!*

BUT, I NOW REALIZE THAT I BLEW IT!

INSTEAD OF USING MY GIFT FOR SOMETHING SPECIAL, I WASTED IT ON SCORING TOUCH-DOWNS! I'M A GUY WHO HAS IT ALL -- MONEY, FAME, POWER!

I OWE SOMETHING TO THOSE THAT *DON'T*...

ESPECIALLY IF I WANT MY BROTHER'S DEATH TO HAVE ANY MEANING!

YOU TALKING CHARITY WORK? SOUP KITCHENS?

NOT QUITE, SUICIDE! WE ARE WHO WE ARE! ANYTHING WE GET INVOLVED IN HAS TO BE FUN, AND EXCITING!

I'VE ALREADY TALKED THIS OVER WITH BRICK AND DARLENE, AND WE'VE COME UP WITH A REALLY WILD IDEA...

A FEW DAYS LATER AT JACK'S APARTMENT...

JACK ASKED ME TO LOOK INTO THE POSSIBILITY OF SETTING UP A FOUNDATION--ONE WITH TAX-EXEMPT STATUS!

SINCE STEVE HAD TWO YEARS TO GO ON HIS LEASE, WE CAN USE THE *SPORTS POWER PLUS* BUILDING AS OUR HEADQUARTERS!

WHEW! I HOPE THIS IDEA WORKS BETTER THAN THAT STUPID *INTENSIFIER*! I CAN'T EVEN BUDGE THIS COUCH!

SHUT UP, SUICIDE!

WHAT'S THE PURPOSE OF THIS FOUNDATION, JACK?

TO HELP PEOPLE WHO DON'T KNOW WHERE ELSE TO GO FOR HELP!

PEOPLE WITH OFFBEAT PROBLEMS--LIKE THE KIND STEVE AND I HAD!

STILL SOUNDS LIKE CHARITY WORK TO ME! WHY NOT GIVE TO THE *UNITED WAY*?

WHY GO TO ALL THE TROUBLE?

BECAUSE'A THE TAX ADVANTAGES, DUMMY!

AND, IT SHOULD BE FUN!

YEAH, WE COULD WRITE OFF ALL OUR TRAVEL AND ENTERTAINMENT!

HOW 'BOUT IF I BOUGHT A NEW CYCLE, OR SPORTS-CAR FOR THE FOUNDATION?

ALL TAX DEDUCTIBLE...

...AND, AS EMPLOYEES'A THE FOUNDATION, WE'D HAVE FULL USE'A THAT EQUIPMENT!

DOESN'T SOUND BAD--BUT I DON'T DO PAPERWORK--AND I AIN'T NO GLORIFIED BOY SCOUT!

DON'T BE RIDICULOUS! WE'LL HIRE A STAFF TO ATTEND TO THE MUNDANE MATTERS!

THAT'S RIGHT! WE'LL ONLY GET INVOLVED IF A CASE IS REAL 'INTERESTIN'!

OTHERWISE, WE'LL MAINLY DO *PR* TYPE STUFF!

ANYONE FOR REFRESHMENTS?

AH'D LOVE ONE, LITTLE LADY!

THIS'LL BE GREAT, GUYS!

IT'LL GIVE US SOMETHING IMPORTANT TO DO IN THE OFF-SEASON--

--AND A REASON TO STICK TOGETHER WHEN OUR FOOTBALL CAREERS ARE OVER!

SPEAK FOR YOUR-SELF, WHITE MAN!

WHY'D JACK BRING *THAT* UP?

WE'LL NEED A NAME! SOME-THING WITH SCOPE AND DIGNITY!

NAH! IT'S GOT TO SHOUT TO THE WORLD THAT--

--WE INTEND TO *KICK* SOME SERIOUS BUTT!

YOU DUMB *KICKERS* ARE GOING TO NEED A LOT MORE THAN A NEW NAME, IF YOU BREAK MY LAMP!

HEY--! THAT'S NOT BAD!

IT DEFINITELY DO SOUND LIKE US!

JUST NEEDS A LITTLE MODIFICATION TO...

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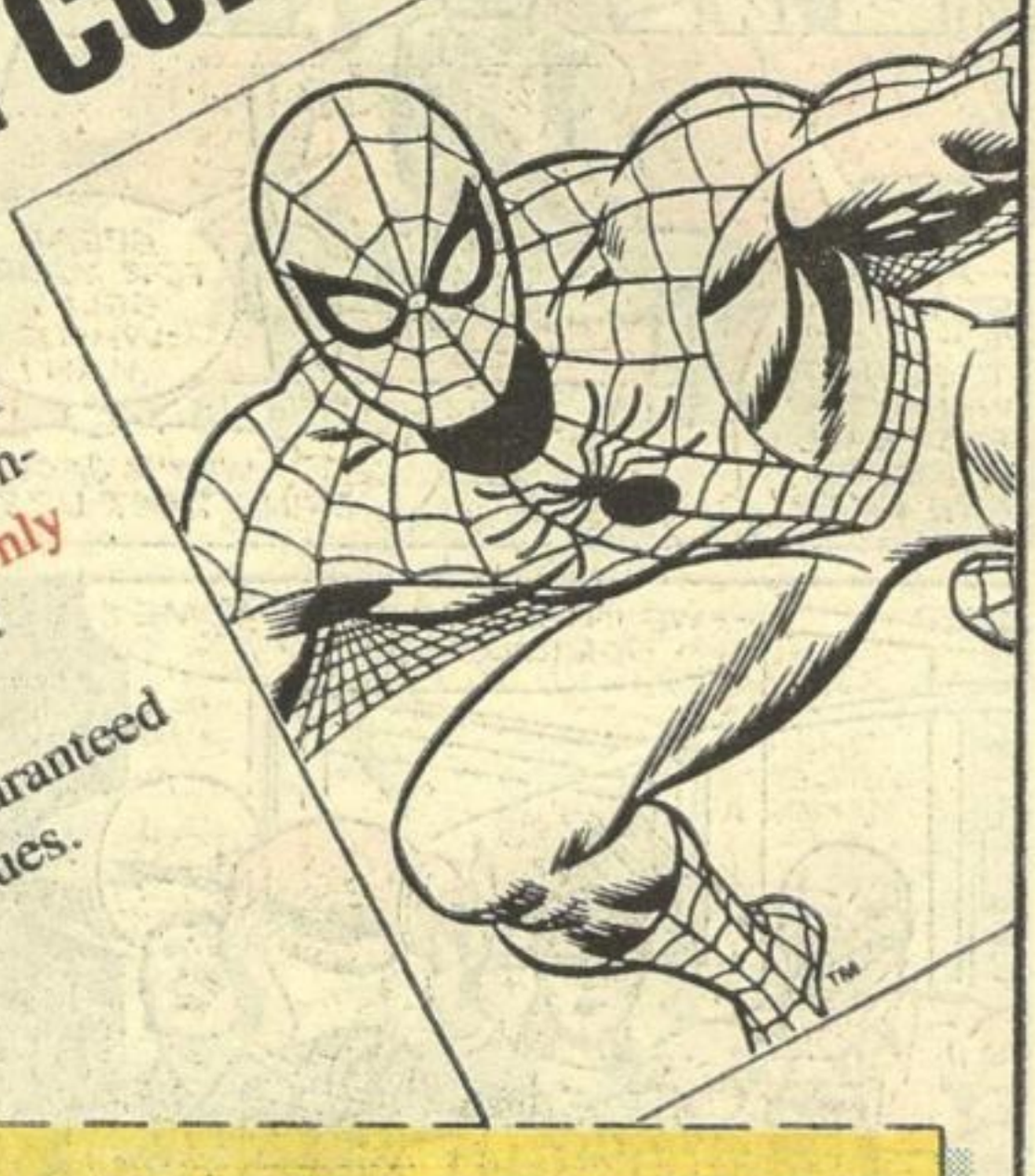

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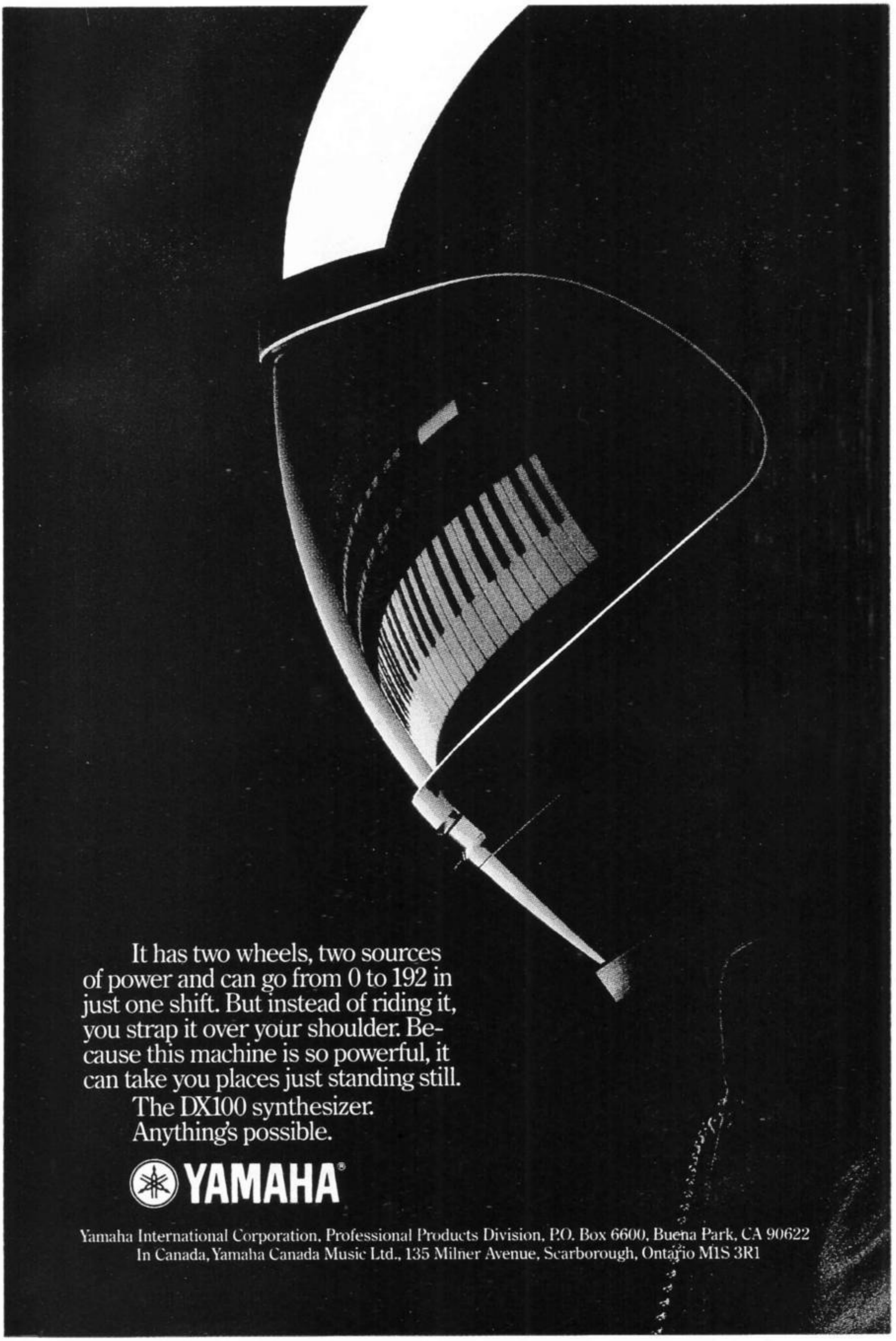

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